night stopped at Lucknow due to non-availability of watch-hours and would have resulted in cancellation of flight for Patna causing avoidable inconvenience to passengers travelling to/from Patna.

(c) and (d) To avoid losses and inconvenience to the passengers due to non-operation of flights, rerouting/rescheduling is resorted to when it becomes impossible to operate the normal schedule due to operational constraints like inclement weather, watch-hour restrictions and other technical reasons. This is normal practice followed by the airlines under such circumstances.

Delay in Finalising Tender Bids for duty free shops

161. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government lost Rs. 200 crores due to the indecision of Airports Authority of India in finalising tender bids for duty free shops' as reported in the Indian Express, dated June 1, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been ordered to fix responsibility in this case;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the outcome of the enquiry; and

(e) the corrective steps taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Air Service to Doha (Qatar)

162. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines is likely to start a direct service from the Qatari Capital Doha to Hyderabad;

(b) if so, the other cities in India to be connected with Doha; and

(c) by when would the service likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines has plans to shortly connect Hyderabad/Cochin with Doha.

Augmentation of Fleet by AI

163. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India is now planning to take AB-310 and Boeing 747-300 on lease to augment their fleet; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to prevent the fiasco of the Caribjet deal being repeated in view of the bad experience with Caribjet?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India plans to augment capacity by dry lease and not wetlease as was the case of Caribjet. However, the responsibility of maintenance compliance with DGCA's mandatory requirements and operations rests with Air India who do not anticipate any problem in compliance of these requirements.

International Flights from Cochin Airport

164. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal to start international flights from Cochin Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any foreign airlines have submitted any proposal to start flights from Cochin; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) Air India and Indian Airlines are already operating international services from Cochin airport. Requests have been received from the Government of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Austria, UAE, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan and Yemen for grant of Cochin as a point of call for their designated airlines. Since Cochin airport has now been declared as an international airport, the above demand will be discussed in the next round of bilateral negotiations for review of air traffic rights with the respective countries.

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